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# T&C

Tan & Cardinal Magazine

WHERE IN THE WORLD  
ARE OUR CARDINALS?

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COLUMBUS ON  
A BUDGET

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HIDDEN  
HOBBIES

HOMECOMING  
IN THE MAKING



# Editorial Staff

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Aselya Sposato

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Brynna Guthrie

## ART DIRECTOR

Danielle DiMarzo

## ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR

Megan Miller

## STAFF WRITERS

Andre' Bradley

Katie Frame

Julia Grimm

Jordyn Mary

## Cover photo provided by

Megan Miller

## Printing services provided

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The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the faculty and administration of Otterbein University.

T&C Magazine is a student publication. One hundred percent of the production, editing and design is done by the students.

The first copy of T&C Magazine is free to the public. Each additional copy is \$3, and payment can be made at the office at 33 Collegeview Rd., Westerville, OH 43081. Offenders will be prosecuted.



## *Letter From the Editor*

When I first moved into Otterbein two summers ago, I remember feeling stressed above all else. I'd just gotten done hauling my stuff up four flights of stairs, I couldn't step outside without instantly sweating and I was already thinking too much about the Spanish class I wasn't prepared for. Needless to say, those first few weeks weren't as picturesque as I thought they'd be.

Yet as the semester progressed, I began to relax and take advantage of the things that make Otterbein a such a neat community. For me, the annual Homecoming celebration was the tipping point where I finally felt a sense of belonging to this campus and the people in it. There's something about being surrounded by so much positive energy that makes this day a classic Otterbein experience. Read more about this fun festival (and the crazy amount of planning that goes into it) on page [insert page number].

As a whole, this issue is designed to help you get to know Otterbein and to make the initial transition from summer break to fall semester a little less painful than mine. My first weeks of college would have gone much more smoothly if I'd opened my eyes to some of the opportunities around me. From the amazing travel abroad courses Otterbein offers [insert page number], to the more practical issues, like getting advice on how to choose a major [insert page number], this issue is packed with need-to-know information on how to make your Cardinal experience as enjoyable as possible.


As you flip through these pages, you may notice some familiar faces. I hope that, in addition to getting the answers you need, this issue also helps you learn more about the compassionate, talented and driven people that make up this campus. You'll find that many of them are more than willing to meet you and strike up a conversation, like OUSG president Casey Rife [insert page number] and Sigma Delta Phi (Sphinx) president Derek Parham, to name a couple.

On a final note, I need to give a huge shout-out to the magazine staff for partnering with me on this wild, month-long journey. Without their creativity, patience and ability to take ideas and run with them, I'm not sure we'd have created something so uniquely us. You guys deserve more appreciation than I can express in a single letter.

Whether you are a freshman who's just gotten settled on campus or a senior prepping for graduation, this issue is sure to offer you something you might need, or better yet, a piece of advice you never knew you needed at all.

*Aselya N. Sposato*

**Aselya Sposato**  
Editor-in-Chief

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# Meet the staff

Get to know the faces behind the pages of Tan & Cardinal



Aselya Sposato '21

## Editor-In-Chief

Aselya Sposato, a junior public relations and journalism and media communication major, loves the simpler things in life, like an afternoon stroll and the power of a good story. Her weekend hikes and impromptu road trips never fail to provide her with writing inspiration, so much so that she's made it her goal to travel as much as possible after graduation. Sposato's life advice to anyone willing to hear it? Invest your time (and money) in experiences. You won't regret it.

**Future goals:** hiking at all the national parks in the U.S.

**Go-to coffee order:** chai tea latte from Java Central in Uptown Westerville

**Stress relievers:** going on long walks and making lists



Danielle DiMarzo '21

## Art Director

People always told her she was a good writer, but Danielle DiMarzo never believed them until she started studying public relations and health communication in college. Even if her decision to pursue communications had been an uncertain one, DiMarzo believes everyone should put themselves out of their comfort zones at least once in life. After all, she says, you never know what you may love if you're too scared to test it out.

**Go-to movie:** "Lilo and Stitch," a childhood favorite

**Dream vacation destinations:** London, Barcelona and Paris

**Secret passion:** reading classic literature



Brynna Guthrie '21

## Assistant Editor

To Brynna Guthrie, a junior public relations major, family and friends are everything. She's a people-person. If she's not busy out exploring the latest coffee shops and catching up with friends, she's curled up on the couch, ordering a pizza and watching a movie with her family. Professionally, Guthrie wants a career she can enjoy until the day she retires, and for her, that's a career of meeting and spending time with new people.

**Ideal weekend:** going out to brunch or relaxing at home

**Mood boosters:** iced coffee and hours of shopping

**Favorite Columbus hot spots:** Duck Donuts and Fox in the Snow Café



Megan Miller '21

## Assistant Art Director

Megan Miller has big dreams, and she's not letting anything get in the way of accomplishing them. She's dedicated countless late nights on the Columbus music scene, chasing after her goal of becoming a published concert photographer. Since 10th grade, Miller's known working on the media side of the music industry is where she belongs. As a junior journalism and communication major, she's taking all the right steps she needs to get there.

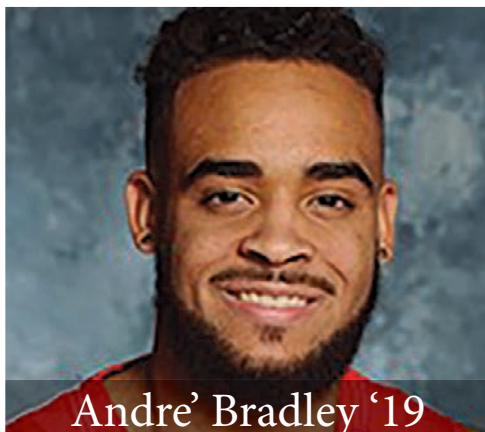
**Song title to describe her life:** "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" by The Maine and Adam Lazzara

**Go-to coffee order:** Mango Dragon Fruit Refresher from Starbucks

**Stress relievers:** playing the ukulele or piano, or singing at the top of her lungs on a car ride home

# Meet the class

Find out more about the staff writers



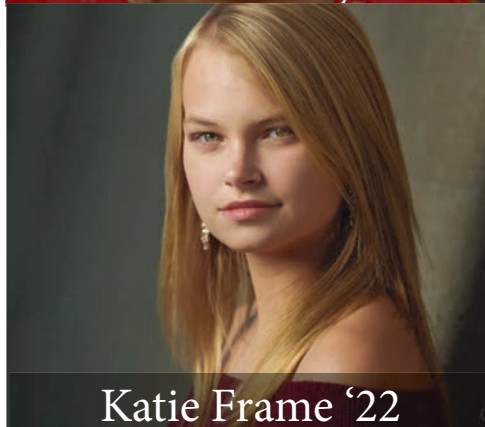
Andre' Bradley '19

Andre' Bradley is a senior journalism and media communications major, whose two biggest loves are sports and family. Growing up, Bradley was always around or involved with sports (mostly basketball), so when he realized being a professional athlete wasn't a realistic possibility, he decided a career in journalism was what he wanted to do because it could keep him involved with sports the rest of his life.

**Go-to movie:** "Love & Basketball"

**Future goals:** Win the lottery and buy front row season tickets to all his favorite team games

**Stress relievers:** Spending time with loved ones and his dog and listening to music or playing video games



Katie Frame '22

After being an English major for approximately a week, Katie Frame, a sophomore journalism and media communications major, finally found her home in the communications department. When she isn't writing, she's blowing off steam by skiing or playing her violin. Her dream in life is to move to Washington, D.C. and to work as a speechwriter for either the FBI or for the White House.

**Song title to describe her life:** Like A Girl by Lizzo

**Favorite thing to do in Columbus:** Get dinner at Bibibop with her friends

**Go-to coffee order:** Strawberry acai refresher with lemonade from Starbucks



Julia Grimm '22

Julia Grimm is bubbly and social but enjoys her time curled up with a great book. Although undecided about her major, she's interested in the communications department and using her skills in writing and editing. Julia dreams up business ideas and hopes to work at or run her own small business someday. She sees the small things in life, and enjoys them, but also wants to go out and explore the world.

**Farthest traveled from home:** Jamaica and Mexico

**Secret passion:** Capsule wardrobing. The concept of a smaller wardrobe is such a great idea, but it's so much harder to apply!

**Mood boosters:** Getting organized and accomplishing a task



Jordan Mary '22

Jordyn Mary, a sophomore equine business management major, is most likely watching one of her favorite films, "Dirty Dancing" or drinking a venti vanilla iced coffee from Starbucks. When she is stressed, you can find Mary reading books and making lists. Being creative and seeing her horse, Aggie, will boost her mood. Mary's advice: Do anything and everything; don't hold yourself back.

**Ideal weekend:** spending all day at the horse barn

**One thing she wants to accomplish:** Travel to the top equine competitions around the world

**Secret passion:** Journalism



# Columbus on a Budget

## Having fun without breaking the bank

Brynna Guthrie '21

background photo: Espresso Air, photos by Megan Miller

**A**s a college student, it can be hard to resist spending more money than you should. The endless early morning Starbucks stops and late-night pizza runs can add up once the semester takes off. Here are a few tips and tricks on how to avoid watching your checking account dwindle this fall.

### Discounts in Uptown Westerville

The biggest thing you can cheat yourself out on as a college student is the student discount. There are countless restaurants and cafés throughout Uptown that are happy to cut you some slack when it comes to your bill. If you're not sure, just ask! You're only a college student for four years, so make sure you're getting the most out of them.

Whits: 10% discount

Red Apron: 15% discount

Java Central: 10% discount

Espresso Air: 15% discount

Koble: 15% discount

Uptown's Fourth Friday festivals: Don't travel to find food trucks and fun shops when you can find them on-campus every fourth Friday of the month, April through September.

### Clothing Stores in the Columbus Area

In case you haven't heard: thrifting is in, people. From clothes to furniture to home goods, check out the following locations for some jaw-dropping discounts.

Otterbein Thrift Store: 177 W. Park St., Westerville

Ohio Thrift: 5738 Columbus Square, Columbus

Village Discount Outlet: offers a 20% discount for college students on Sundays, 3500 Cleveland Ave., Columbus

Discount Fashion Warehouse: 110 N. Wilson Road, Columbus

TJ Maxx: 1255 Polaris Parkway, Columbus

### On-Campus Resources

Another thing not to cheat yourself out on are Otterbein's campus resources. As a student, you have free access to the following budget-friendly options:

Promise House: Whether you need a quick snack or some shampoo, this student-led community resource center has your back. Check their social media pages to find out when they're open.

Student Health Center: The biannual "OtterPlague," also known as the seasonal

sickness, is bound to strike again this year. When it does, the student health center, by the Home Street Commons Apartments, can help you avoid pricey visits to doctors' offices.

Counseling Center: Feeling blue? Stressed out? Maybe just need someone to talk to? The counseling center offers a variety of free services that might just be the help you need. All you have to do is schedule an appointment.

Rike and Clements Recreation Center: Let's put it this way: This may very well be the only time in your life when you have a free gym membership. Don't let it go to waste! ■



Otterbein Thrift Store



# Change your mind? Change your major!

So you've decided you hate your major. Now what?

Aselya Sposato '21

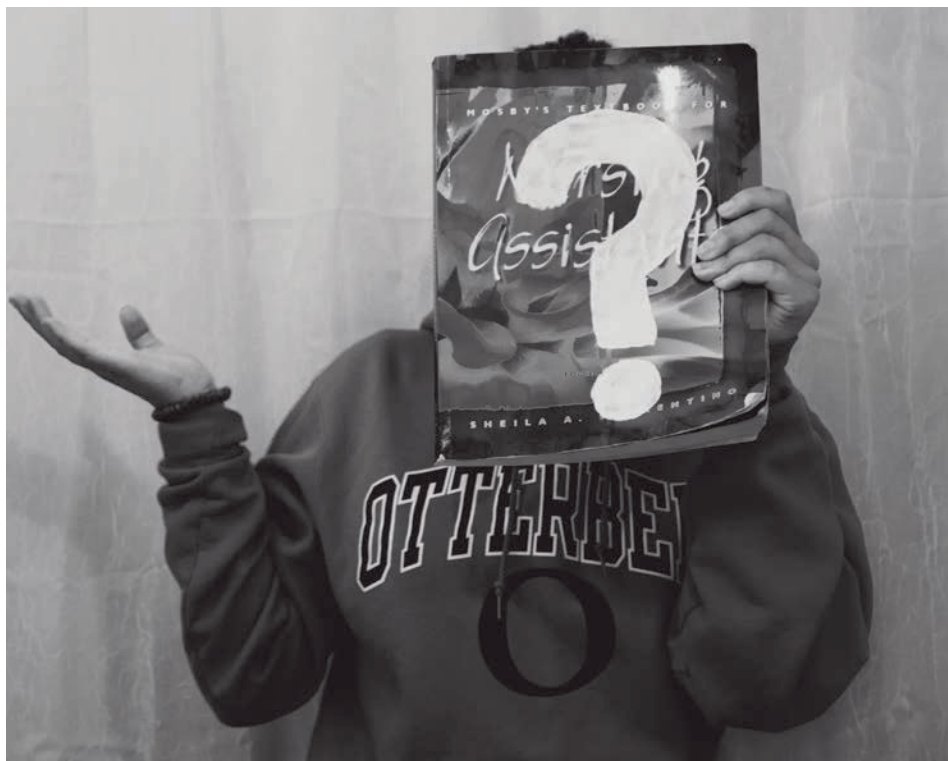


Photo by Megan Miller

**T**he first few weeks of college are some of the most liberating and stressful experiences new students face. After finally getting all moved in, meeting countless new people and exploring Uptown, it's not long before it's time to hit the books. While some students come to campus with a picture-perfect idea of what major they want to pursue, sitting through a few lectures can quickly change that.

Thankfully, students are not alone in this anxiety inducing experience. In fact, it's pretty common across the board. According to a 2016 report from the Education Advisory Board (EAB), up to 80% of college students will switch their major at some point in their academic career.

## Why?

Lisa Byers, program manager for the Center for Student Success at Otterbein, points to societal pressure as one of the

main reasons.

"There's a lot of encouragement from other people and high schools that you should know what you want to do," says Byers.

This can cause many students to rush into choosing a major that may not be best for them.

For sophomore Lloyd Hawthorne, who changed his major from actuarial science to public relations and back to actuarial science, it was the challenging coursework and overwhelming nature of freshman year that made him question his academic decision.

"I felt like I really didn't know what I wanted to do with my life," says Hawthorne. "There's also such a stigma behind those who constantly change their major about not being able to graduate on time and that you don't have a sense of what your goal in life is."

However, research suggests otherwise. The same EAB report indicates that students who make a final decision on their

major as late as two years into their undergraduate studies do not see an increase in their time to graduate.

With this in mind, Byers has three quick tips for students struggling to choose a major:

**1** It's built in Otterbein's curriculum to explore. Get a flavor for some courses in different departments by choosing integrative studies courses (INSTs) that interest you. And let's be honest, your first few semesters are made for getting those pesky general education courses out of the way anyway, so you have some time to relax.

**2** Have 20 minutes in between classes? Stop by the Center for Career and Professional Development and take the Focus2 test. It's an online tool that gauges your personal interests and suggests career options based on your responses. If anything, it's worth a shot.

**3** When in doubt, talk to someone, whether it's the CSS, an academic advisor or even a friend.

For Hawthorne, it was the encouragement and support from his friends and family that got him back on track to doing what he loves most.

"Start from the ground level up and remind yourself of the things you find the most happiness doing," says Hawthorne. "If you work hard, don't panic and find something you like doing, you'll figure it out." ■





# What's the buzz



Students voice their opinions about the delayed campus center renovation project.

Aselya Sposato '21

The campus center renovation project has been on the university's radar since fall 2018, with design goals of creating a balcony and first-floor dining, among other additions. However, a lack of funding has pushed renovation plans back by a year, with little communication from campus governance to the student body about the delay.

Since the university board of trustees voted to increase tuition costs of \$600 per year, President John Comerford proposed that funding for the campus center be included in tuition costs, eliminating an additional facility fee. According to Comerford, distributing part of the tuition to the campus center renovation will begin once construction starts, yet the exact amount of tuition going into the project remains unknown.

T&C Media's coverage last year of the campus center renovation and tuition increases sparked outrage from students on social media. A year later, find out what students have to say about the project and its impact on campus life, finances and everything in between.



Judson Huston, senior, accounting

"If I were coming in as a freshman or sophomore, and something that was going to be started in the summer hasn't been started yet, I'd want the inside on either why it hasn't been started or what the plans going forward are. A lot of students use it to hang out that I know of, especially freshman and sophomores, because they have meal plans and are obligated to live on campus."

Brittany Katona, junior, early childhood education

"I think it's good that they aren't adding more to the \$600 fee, but if I'm still paying for it [the campus center], I would hope it would get done before I graduate, so I'd still have at least a year to use it."



photos by Aselya Sposato

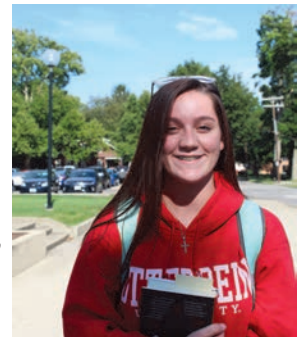


Curtis Tatum, sophomore, English

"The fact that nothing construction-wise has been done yet is very annoying, especially because tuition has been raised, which complicates things as well. I just want to get the ball rolling. It seems kind of useless for current students now because by the time it's built, we'll be graduated. It just doesn't seem too fair."

Kyleigh Cline, sophomore, early childhood education

"I like the project. I think the campus center could definitely use a bit of renovation. It's a little worn down right now. The increased tuition bothers me mostly because I can't really afford to go here much anyway. I think it's okay if it's not too much, but I think they really need to think about the students who are already struggling."



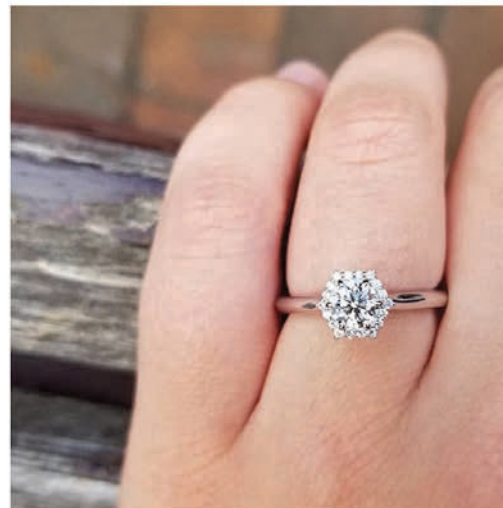
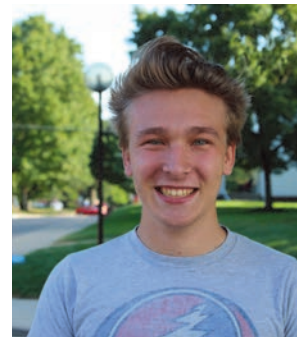
Amanda Woods, freshman, equine business

"I always think renovation can be a good thing. By now, with raising tuition, they should be somewhere close to their funds, especially if they had a time limit already set, so I'm hoping it'll be coming up soon. I think it'll be a good idea as long as it happens."



BJ White, freshman, computer science

"I think it's nice the way it is. It doesn't really need renovated, in my opinion. I don't see any faulty design in the building, and everything seems to work smoothly. I like it the way it is."



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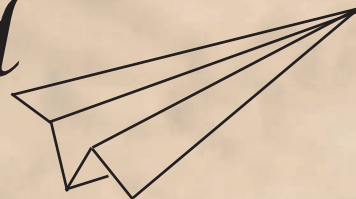
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# Where in the World Are our Cardinals?



Follow along as these students share their experiences studying abroad

## Letters from Lucca The power of positive psychology

Aselya Sposato, '21, photos by Morgan Mains

When Morgan Mains, a senior psychology major, first heard about the psychology department's spring travel course to Italy, it was course's focus on positive psychology—one of the field's newest and most rapidly developing areas—that drew her in.

Throughout the 12-day trip, Mains reflected on some of the good things she experienced each day abroad. Later, she studied her entries for some of the key factors that influence optimal human functioning, like positive emotion, engagement and relationships.

During her time in the small Tuscan town of Lucca, she found that proximity to water had an unexpected positive effect on her emotions, as well as quality time spent with friends. Read about some of the highlights Mains jotted down in her journal during the May 14 the train ride back from Lucca that made her visit a day well-spent:

Rome, Italy: Colosseum



Frascati, Italy: Minardi Winery our group got to take a pasta-making class and include in the picture is the vineyards chef.



May 14, 2019

- Getting to hang out in the sun all day and also getting to dip my feet in the river surrounding the border of Lucca
- Hanging out as a group, my friends and I just laughing and joking around with each other on the train back to Florence
- Lucca was an amazing area, and I'm glad I got the opportunity to experience a small, Tuscan town outside of the major cities.
- One of my favorite experiences was getting the chance to explore the town with only three other people and not going in with any expectations or guidelines besides our train tickets.



Pisa, Italy: (from left to right) Katherine Clifford, Morgan Mains, Kelsey Brown, and Jenna Rutan



Florence, Italy: View from Boboli Gardens



Padua, Italy (Botanical Garden): Group Photo



Venice, Italy: Photo from the water taxi



# African Adventures

## Making memories in Malawi

Aselya Sposato, '21, photos by Selena LaBair

Sometimes, decisions are better left to the last minute—or at least, that's the case for senior criminology and sociology double major Selena LaBair. She found that taking a leap of faith was exactly the right choice.

After signing up for the spring travel course to Malawi, in southeastern Africa, on the last day of registration, LaBair quickly found herself bussing up and down the entire length of Malawi, stopping at small communities to donate food and supplies along the way.

One of her favorite memories includes growing closer with her host family: Justice, his wife, Nyathipa, and their twin girls. LaBair often found herself discussing anything from market shopping to gender expectations with the couple. Read about LaBair's first morning with her host family and faculty advisor, Denise Shively, in Nkhoma, a mission area in Lilongwe, Malawi.

May 5, 2019

"I set the alarm for 7:30 a.m., so when I woke at 4 a.m. to the sound of a rooster crowing, I was discombobulated to say the least. The sounds of a full family beginning their Sunday filled the house. Tada and Takonda (Justice and Nyathipa's twin daughters) were eagerly waiting for me to wake up, winding their toy cars and having them bump into the bedroom door. After all the students filled the house, we moseyed to church. Everyone put on their Sunday best: I wore my chitenge, the traditional cloth we were given before we left for our trip, a black shirt, and sandals. I tried to make my hair bun as respectable as possible. I walked in with the group but there were hardly any seats. Denise told me to ask a woman on the edge of a pew if I could join her. I quietly did so, and she graciously slid over to make room. When the music began, the singers swayed with their music, and I too felt moved. The music filled the church. There were no added instruments, only their voices. Although I couldn't understand the service, I could tell they were telling a grand story. While I am not religious, I would be happy to attend this service again."



Lilongwe Ox Ride with Kids

Ride to Remote Lilongwe Village with Selena and Peter



Cape McClear Nature Reserve



# Visiting Vienna

## A Walk Through History

Aselya Sposato '21, photos by Sam McGonigal

Growing up, voice performance major Sam McGonigal traveled all over the U.S. with her high school show choir, igniting her initial passions for music and adventure. However, she never imagined having the chance to visit Vienna, Austria, famously known as one of the major music capitals of the world.

Though the course was taught by music department faculty, the course curriculum covered more than fine arts, includ-

ing discussions on the country's history, culture and architecture dating back to medieval times.

During her first few weeks in Vienna, McGonigal spent countless hours on walking tours, exploring historical sights and concert venues—something she immediately became fascinated with. Read about one of McGonigal's day trips through the city and how one of the sights she visited became a memory she'll hold onto forever:

"One of the most surreal experiences I had on this trip was walking into the oldest church in Vienna, called Ruprecht-skirche. Walking into the solemn silence of the church, I sat in one of the wooden pews and took in the stained glass windows, Roman arches and the simple crucifix hanging in front of the altar. The cathedral was built during the 11th century in the Romanesque style. The building had retained some of its original stained glass windows and the original church bells. It also featured a complete relic of Saint Vitalis, a victim of the Roman Catacombs. I felt extremely humbled to be sitting where Viennese worshippers had prayed hundreds of years before me."

*"One of the most surreal experiences I've had on this trip was walking into the the oldest church in Vienna, Ruprechtskirche. Walking into the solemn silence of the church, I sat in one of the wooden pews and took in the stained glass windows, roman arches, and the simple Crucifix hanging in front of the altar. The cathedral was built during the eleventh century in the Romanesque style. The building has retained some of its original stained glass windows, and the original church bells. It also features a complete relic of Saint Vitalis, a victim of the Roman Catacombs. I felt extremely humbled to be sitting where Viennese worshippers had prayed hundreds of years before me."*





# Across the Atlantic

An ocean couldn't stop this unique friendship from forming

Aselya Sposato '21, photos by Chance Landers

Having a pen pal throughout grade school is one thing, but Chance Landers, a 2019 Otterbein graduate, took this idea to the next level.

Landers, who spent years learning the German language prior to going on the spring travel course trip to Austria and Hungary, was ready to brush up on his German-language skills. Using HelloTalk, an international chat room app for those learning new languages, he began having regular text conversations with Vienna local David Lechner, who was trying to better his English.

When it was time to depart for Austria, Landers knew he had to meet his new friend in person. After settling in Vienna, the pair met over coffee on two occasions, only speaking English and German to each other. Read more about some of the things Landers learned about Lechner while chatting in Vienna.

Chance (left) with David (right)



*With HelloTalk, I was able to connect with one friend in person while in Vienna. His name is David, and he's the same age as me. He attends a university in Vienna and studies athletic science. He's part of a program for children in Africa, where he's the sponsor for a child in Africa who's in need, be it for food, school supplies, clothes, etc.*

*I've not heard back yet to see how he did, but this past Friday, David took an English proficiency test. He wants to study in England for his degree in athletic science, and he has to take a language proficiency test to make sure he's able to understand and communicate with others while he's there. Since my two encounters with him in-person, I can say that his English has gotten quite good!*

Beethoven's Grave



Budapest Skyline



Belvedere Palace Garden



Duck Dish



Pork Knuckle Dish





# Sports teams seeking success

## What to expect from fall sports this season

by Brynna Guthrie '21

Fall sports are in full swing with student athletes back on-campus and gearing up for victory. Find out how the teams are preparing for the upcoming season. ■



### Football

As the football team gears up for this season, the head coach, Tim Doup, has high expectations.

"We want to get back on the winning track," says Doup. "The guys are older and more mature this season. We strive to get back in the top half of the conference and winning record."

Last season, the team was complimented on their strong defensive line, which helped keep the demeanor strong with several experienced defensive players. The defense has remained strong this year, while the offense is getting stronger as the season progresses.

"I have noticed a big difference in the quality of the team this year at camp than last year. We are coming along really well right now," says Doup.

The team's motto is "time to go to work." The mantra has served as the motivation the team needs to get the job done from the moment they step foot on the field.



### Women's Soccer

It's no secret that the women's soccer team won the OAC tournament, which qualified them for the NCA tournament last season. This year, the hope for the team and head coach Brandon Koons is to return where they were last season and go from there.

"There may be some pressure on our players this season from last year's achievements, but I don't want them to feel that way," says Koons.

The team played their first and only scrimmage of the season against Ohio Premier and was down at halftime but came back and won in the end.

The teams' core values are: class, cometary, competitive edge, discipline, empathy and pride. Each current player has more input on what each of these mean to them. They've also said that to "be here, be family, be gritty and be daring," are important qualities they keep in mind.

The team is traveling to New Jersey for tournaments on Aug. 29 for their first official pre-season games.



### Volleyball

Going into the 2019 season, the volleyball team has a goal to be conference champions again this year. The team lost several seniors last year but has had a positive pre-season so far.

"We have a lot of experience with returning players even though we graduated a lot of seniors," says head coach Monica Wright. "There's a different look after losing our setter and some offensive players, but defensively, we're going to be strong. We are a defensive-oriented team, and our goal is to be more consistent than we have in the past, even though we may not be as flashy as we have been."

The players have done a lot of off-season training. Wright has hand-picked her team, which consists of competitive, focused and dedicated players.

"We have spent a lot of time focusing on team culture; that's what the team is all about," says Wright. "We have a 'growth mindset' and are continuing to grow and focus on progress over product."

The volleyball team is busy practicing and preparing to be the best team they can be.

photo credit to Otterbein Athletics





A large crowd of people is seated in bleachers at an outdoor event, likely a homecoming celebration. The crowd is diverse in age and attire, with many people wearing red clothing. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds, and numerous red, white, and blue streamers and confetti are falling from above, creating a festive atmosphere. A tall, grey metal structure, possibly a light tower or part of a stadium, is visible on the right side of the frame.

# HOMECOMING IN THE MAKING

FIND OUT WHAT IT TAKES TO PLAN THIS  
HISTORIC CELEBRATION EACH YEAR

*photos provided by Otterbein Uni-*



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Aselya Sposato '21

The smell of freshly flipped pancakes wafts through the air in front of Rousch Hall. Leftover glitter is strewn about the streets leading to Memorial Stadium. A sea of people swathed in cardinal and tan are laughing and embracing, making it impossible to tell a friend from a stranger.

Looking around, it's easy to get caught up in the energy of an Otterbein Homecoming, an annual feat that draws hundreds of alumni, community members and students together to experience once again the brick-lined streets and echoing bells of Otterbein University Love Song ringing from Towers Hall. However, what's not as easy to visualize are the countless hours of careful planning it takes to make this weekendlong celebration happen each year.

"I'll consider myself an expert at planning these things after this one's over," saysen Schwarz, associate director for alumni relations. Though new to his role, this is the fifth consecutive Homecoming he has helped plan and his first as part of the four-person team that makes up the alumni relations department, the powerhouse behind every Otterbein Homecoming.



Schwarz, planning for this year's Homecoming started the day after last year's Homecoming ended, beginning with booking physical locations on campus.

"We plan Homecoming dates five years in advance, because we have to make sure there are no big reservations or renovations going on. We also have to make sure we're going to have enough tables and chairs and that the food trucks are going to be available, because Lord knows there's a food truck festival going on somewhere," said Schwarz, chuckling.

With each month, the alumni relations department's duties range anywhere from the logistical, like mailing the more than 800 save-the-dates to community members, alumni and parents, down to the nitty gritty details of making sure there are enough trash cans on campus during the event and that the cafeteria is serving gluten-free food options.

It may seem like too much for one department to handle, which is why the alumni relations team is not alone. Armed with a committee of representatives from every department on campus, including student affairs, athletics and the Otterbein Police Department, the committee helps plan the physical events of Homecoming weekend, like the petting zoo hosted by

the Center for Community Engagement or the Center for Student Involvement's annual bonfire.

The university also has had more than 100 years of experience, including its fair share of Homecoming horror stories, to learn from.

"One year they shot off streamers from a [parade] float," said Schwarz. "The streamers hit the power lines all the way up, and there was a big burst of electricity that sounded like a huge bug zapper. No one was hurt, but there's no longer any shooting streamers through a cannon at Homecoming."

The Alumni Relations Department's duties don't end when Homecoming begins, either. When asked if he got to sit down and relax during the weekend's events, Schwarz was incredulous.

"What? I'm rolling around on a golf cart, with a coffee in one hand and a Schneider's doughnut in the other," he said enthusiastically.

With more than 2,000 attendees expected at this year's Homecoming, the event is geared up to be as big and bold as ever, with a few small surprises sprinkled in the mix. Whatever this year brings, planning for an Otterbein Homecoming remains the same each year: it takes a village, or rather, a university. ■





# REACHING NEW NOTES

## HOW OTTERBEIN BAND MEMBERS PREPARE FOR HOMECOMING EVENTS

by Brynna Guthrie '21

The sun has just finished rising and Memorial Stadium sits in early morning silence until chirps of instruments start to fill the air. It's an early Sunday morning, and the Otterbein University marching band is out for morning block. It's part of the pre-season camp the band uses to prepare for Homecoming events each year.

"The band is very involved on the day of Homecoming," says Kendell Edgerton, a junior music education major and one of this year's drum majors. "We're hoping to get most of our halftime show on the field during the week of camp to prep for game day."

Preparing the music and marching sets for Homecoming is no easy task. The halftime show that premieres at each football game includes up to five songs, not to mention the many others used throughout Homecoming Saturday.

"The band begins preparing for band camp, pregame and the halftime show about two weeks in advance and runs through all the songs several times, which is a lot of rehearsing and practicing," says Taylor Hardy, a senior music education major.

This year, the band is performing music from Prince and Queen, chosen as an ode to the recent passing of Prince and as a nod to the release of the popular

biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody," starring Rami Malek.

After morning block, band members retreat indoors for music sectionals, where the group splits up by instrument to focus on some of the finer details in the music.

When the mid-day heat gets cooler and the sun begins to set, the band heads back outside after dinner to put the music and marching sets together on the field. Every movement made during the halftime show is rehearsed each evening.

In between memorizing notes and sets, the band still makes room for some fun.

"One day it was hot and muggy, so we brought water guns to practice so we could cool off," laughs junior biochemistry and molecular biology major Ra-

chel Muti.

The band spends up to 80 hours of hard work and dedication preparing songs and the halftime show for the Homecoming day parade. They spend an extra four hours each week practicing together leading up to Homecoming day.

Band director Jordi Vilanova is excited to see how the hard work of his students pays off.

"The band is very talented and positive this year. It's always nice to hang out with these amazing and talented students," said Vilanova.

The band members play a large role in spreading school spirit, especially the day of Homecoming. Complete with peppy attitudes and flashy uniforms, the marching band is sure to spread school spirit and smiles again at this year's Homecoming. ■





# ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

FROM DAWN TO DUSK, THE OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY CHEER TEAM DOESN'T MESS AROUND WHEN IT COMES TO HOMECOMING SATURDAY

by '21

It's around 4 a.m. on a hazy Saturday morning when Kaitlyn Brooks, a senior marketing / business administration and management double major, rolls out of bed. She is not a morning person, but today is an important day: it's Homecoming. She tightens her ponytail, grabs her pompoms and heads out the door.

She's soon followed by Jadelyn Hennon, a senior nursing major, along with the rest of the 16 girls on the Otterbein University cheerleading team, each with matching hairstyles, lipstick and crisp new uniforms. They're on their way to Rousch Hall for the 1847 Breakfast, the kickoff event to every Otterbein University Homecoming celebration. It's just the first in a series of events that will keep the cheerleaders busy for the next 13-plus hours.

After breakfast, marching in the parade, navigating their way through the sea of activity in front of the Campus Center and cheering at the Memorial Stadium tailgate, it's time to start getting ready for the crown jewel of the weekend: the Homecoming football game. It's the moment Brooks and Hennon have been waiting for all day.

"The excitement when you walk into the stadium [on Homecoming], it's different from a regular game," said



Brooks. "The team is excited, and the cheerleaders and fans are all so excited. It's a whole different experience. You can just feel it."

At exactly 2 p.m., the cheerleaders are sprinting across the football field to the roar of the crowd and the beat of the marching band blasting the Otterbein fight song. It's game time. From this point forward, the cheerleaders' routine has been planned and rehearsed for weeks, right down to every cheer, stunt and toe touch.

"We pretty much run through, start to finish, what the game will look like," said Hennon. "So we'll decide what side of the goal post to cheer on, when we're going to do certain stunts and where we're

going to stand to do certain cheers."

Over the course of the next three hours, the cheerleaders perform more than 40 cheers, dances and stunts they've been perfecting since spring tryouts, making sure every motion is done in precise unison.

After the game, the team often appears at other campus events before they're done for the day, like last year's alumni event at the Point where the team greeted and held doors for visitors.

"The night after Homecoming is one of the best night's sleep I think I will ever get," said Hennon, laughing.

Despite the long hours, sweaty practices and stress of preparing for the weekend, Hennon and Brooks both agree that it's all part of the role.

"We put in a lot of effort for these things. It's not easy, and it's something we have to work at," said Brooks. "But it's our purpose to not only encourage our athletes, but to really spread school spirit to the students, alumni and whoever else is at the game watching."

No matter what this year's celebration holds, the cheerleaders remain a constant force in making sure Homecoming weekend is one of high spirits, energy and, of course, victory. ■





# GEARING UP FOR GREEK LIFE

## OTTERBEIN GREEK LIFE RULES THE ANNUAL HOMECOMING PARADE

by Brynna Guthrie '21



It's about 9 a.m. on Homecoming morning and some of the members or "Owls" of the Sigma Alpha Tau sorority are meeting for breakfast to fuel up before the big day. About a week ago, the sororities on-campus were busy prepping their floats for the annual Homecoming parade. It's tradition for each sorority and fraternity to come up with a theme for their float, with T-shirts and apparel to match.

Leading up to the parade, the Owls go all out to make their float flashy and extravagant, choosing a theme of "SAT is where my heart is." Both the sororities and fraternities on campus spend hours creating some of the craziest and most eye-catching ensembles of the day.

Going Greek is an important part of campus life at Otterbein. About 30% of the student population is involved in Greek life on campus. Otterbein offers six local sororities, six local fraternities, two national fraternities and two National

Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) chapters.

When they're not busy designing their floats, many of the Greek life organizations use Homecoming weekend to connect with alumni, like members of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

"Every time I've experienced Homecoming, it would be with the alumni of the fraternity and the parents of my peers," says Logan Horn, a senior finance major. "It's a good opportunity to see alumni come back and celebrate the organizations on campus."

Several Otterbein alumni visit Homecoming each year to visit with the current active members of their college sorority or fraternity.

Otterbein alumna and former member of Sigma Alpha Tau, Mackenzie Siebert, is planning on visiting campus and reconnecting with friends on

Homecoming this year.

"I want to be reconnected with my sisters and attend my first ever alumni meeting," says Siebert. "It's a re-election year, and I plan on running for something on the alumni executive board for Sigma Alpha Tau. I am excited to see how the house and girls are doing and spend the day back at my alma mater!"

Despite the frenzy of activity, competition and hours of planning, junior public relations major Navi Kinkopf says the action-packed weekend is a highlight each year.

"Homecoming was easily my favorite weekend at Otterbein," says Kinkopf. "It's great that for one weekend everyone of different Greek life [organizations], majors, athletic teams, and dorm life can unite as a whole and share time together." ■







# Hidden Hobbies

Find out what these students and faculty are up to outside the classroom.

Brynna Guthrie '21

## Reaching New Heights

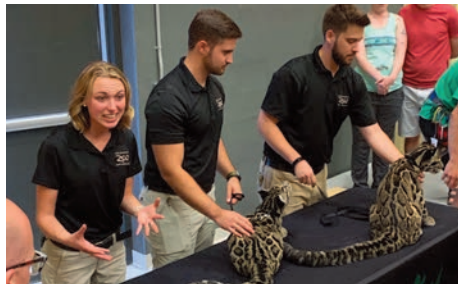
Inspired by famous climber Alex Honnold's free solo climb of El Capitán in Yosemite National Park, Ashton Jerger, a senior zoo and conservation science and biology double major, has been fully invested in rock climbing ever since.

Participating in a rock climbing class with her friends at Columbus' Vertical Adventures only fueled her passion for the sport even more. In August, she combined her studies in zoology with her newfound love of rock climbing to plan Vertical Adventure's Climbing for Clouds, a fundraising event dedicated to raising money for research on clouded leopards.

Jerger, who works directly with clouded leopards at the Columbus Zoo

and Aquarium, calls the event "very humbling." Half the proceeds raised at Climbing for Clouds went toward funding future research projects on the vulnerable species.

After a year of mastering two of her initial climbing styles, top rope and bouldering, Jerger is now training to become a lead climber, a climbing style requiring intense training and experience.



photos provided by Ashton Jerger

## Heading to Nashville

When he's not hitting the books, Devin Henry, a senior nursing major, straps on his guitar and gets behind a microphone whenever he can. Henry began playing the guitar when he was 10, teaching himself the basics from YouTube videos.

Despite his confidence performing in front of large crowds now, he used to be incredibly shy and would only perform in front of close friends. "When I first began at Otterbein, I sang for a fundraiser concert and got up on stage to play a couple songs and got over my fear, which made me want to pursue my music career," says Henry.

During his freshman year, Henry wrote a song about his hometown that he posted on Facebook. It quickly went viral within his county, eventually getting played on the radio.



To get his foot in the door of the music and arts scene, Henry played at The Bluebird Cafe and Belcourt Taps in Nashville, Tennessee, where individual artists are welcome to play their own music. "I want to use my music to help other people and build a platform that encourages others," says Henry.



photos provided by Devin Henry





## Hitting the Big Screen

Otterbein psychology professor Dr. Noam Shpancer is a licensed psychologist by day and screenplay writer, fiction novelist and blogger by night.

Shpancer co-wrote the screenplay for the film “The Other Story,” which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and was named Israel’s most successful movie of 2018.

It all started when the director, Avi Nesher, who’s worked on dozens of other films throughout his career, became intrigued with some of Shpancer’s writing and asked him to co-write “The Other Story” with him.

“It took a long time to write the film,” says Shpancer. “We started writing in 2011 and changed the direction and plot until we got something that was good and could be done.”

Shpancer, who was born in Israel, balances his 20-year teaching career at Otterbein and his work at a private practice in Columbus with his career as a fiction novelist as well.

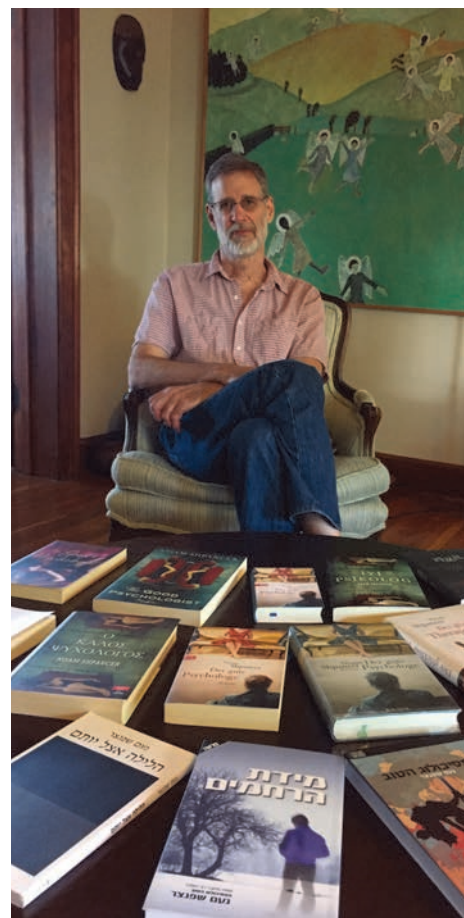
Of the three novels he’s written, his second novel, “The Good Psychologist,” was a bestseller in Germany, Turkey and Israel, translated into six languages and published in the U.S. Shpancer’s third novel, “A Measure of Mercy,” was published in Israel and Germany.

Shpancer also writes a blog for Psychology Today.

“After my second novel [was] bought by my American publisher, my agent looked for public relations stuff and essentially arranged a gig with Psychology Today to do a blog for them, which started in 2010,” says Shpancer.

Shpancer’s blog, called “Insight Therapy,” involves topics like psychotherapy, child development and social psychology, which are his interests.

The blog has gotten 1 million hits and is a popular platform in today’s medical field



photos provided by Dr. Noam Shpancer



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# Exploring Westerville

Get out of the dorm room and into the wilds of Westerville

by Brynna Guthrie '21



photos by Danielle DiMarzo

Between sitting through hours of classes, hitting up the library for daily study sessions and juggling extracurricular activities, squeezing in some time to get outdoors and exercise isn't easy for college students. In fact, a 2016 study by the CDC reported a 27% decrease in regular physical activity from high school to college students. But just because college students aren't exercising as much as they used to doesn't mean it's any less good for you.

Regular outdoor exercise helps combat issues that commonly plague college students, like poor stress management and mental health. Still not motivated to get outdoors? What many Otterbein students may not realize is just how easy and accessible it is to find places to exercise (that aren't the Clements Rec Center). Westerville is home to more than 40 community parks and open spaces, offering a quick escape for students wanting to unplug for a few

hours. One of Otterbein's fan-favorite outdoor locations is the Hoover Mudflats Boardwalk in Galena, Ohio. Though not within walking distance from campus, the quick, 15-minute drive is worth it for the more than 1,500 feet of wooden boardwalk through the Hoover Nature Preserve. The site is frequently visited by birdwatchers and can also be used for fishing and kayaking. As a bonus,



there's a bar and grill nearby in case visitors work up an appetite toward the end of their stroll.

For those that prefer to bike instead of walk, the Alum Creek mountain bike trail is one of the best nearby options. Separated into two phases, the trail starts in Lewis Center, Ohio, and continues for close to 11 miles into the second phase. The trail offers wooded scenery, reservoir views and multiple bridge crossings to keep things interesting. Those looking for a more relaxed, intermediate trail should stick with phase one.

"It was nice to literally get off the beaten

path and try something new so close to home," said Abby Studebaker, a recent Otterbein graduate. "If mountain biking seems a little intimidating, you could also hike the trails. Alum Creek really has something for everyone when it comes to getting outside."

Not in the mood to drive? Check out the Alum Creek Greenway trail, just a seven-minute walk from main campus. The trail head is to the left as you cross the bridge over Alum Creek and is neatly paved and well-maintained throughout the year,

making it the perfect for a spontaneous exercise session or lazy afternoon stroll. While these are just some of the fun outdoor hotspots near campus, there are plenty of others to explore too. The next time you have a free afternoon or need some weekend plan ideas, try heading outside for some fresh air. And when it comes to simplicity, Studebaker said it best:

"Going on an adventure doesn't have to mean driving for hours or having fancy equipment. Sometimes it can just mean you, a friend, and a dirt path." ■



photos by Lance Kriesch



# Alumni Spotlight

## The man behind the magic

by Aselya Sposato '21

Nearly all the lights in Fritsche Theatre are turned off, except for one. It casts award-winning lighting designer and Otterbein University professor T.J. Gerckens in a harsh, white spotlight in the center of the stage.

It's about a month before the debut of Otterbein University's production of "Singin' In the Rain." Gerckens, along with a group of design tech students he teaches, is busy positioning the lights for the show in Cowan Hall, also known as "the pumpkin." It's a nickname he coined because of the theater's dark orange interior.

Dressed in his trademark outfit of baggy jeans and Skechers sneakers, Gerckens is bent slightly forward and staring intently at a spot on the scuffed stage floor, brow furrowed. There's a stage lift hiding in the shadows of the back-left corner.

"Tip it up just a hair," says Gerckens. "Now take it downstage just a touch." Someone in the lift adjusts the spotlight so it's slightly shifted from its original center position. To anyone else, the change is hardly detectable, but Gerckens nods in satisfaction. "Good. Lock it up," he says, taking a sip of Diet Pepsi.

With this, the rest of the lights slowly turn up to a dim glow, and those in the theatre seem to let out a collective breath they didn't know they were holding as Gerckens prepares for a new scene.

"Next," Gerckens says.

An empty theatre is not an unfamiliar scene for Gerckens. In fact, he spent much of his career as a lighting designer in the dark of theaters, including some of the best-known in the country: the Goodman in Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and others on and off Broadway. Internationally, he's designed in England, Australia and at the La Scala Opera House in Milan, Italy. However, the moment Gerckens enters a theater for the first time is the same, no matter the size, construction or reputation of it. He immediately starts



Gerckens testing lights in Cowan Hall

looking at the way it is laid out, where the audience sits and the construction of the lighting rig.

Christina Kirk, chair of Otterbein's Department of Theatre and Dance and "Singin' In the Rain" director, said she's known and worked with Gerckens for more than 15 years. "I could look at a design and think it's gorgeous, but T.J. will see six things he wants to change," she says. "His work is subtle, but complex."

Gerckens has received multiple Jefferson Awards for his lighting designs, the equivalent of a writer winning a Pulitzer Prize or a singer receiving a Grammy. Rather than displaying his trophies in a flashy glass cabinet, they sit on a cluttered bookshelf in his dimly lit, windowless office, hardly noticeable among piles of papers and knickknacks. "I always tell people that when you have the opportunity to do something great, don't suck. I'm just fortunate in that when I've had those opportunities myself, I haven't sucked," said Gerckens, gesturing nonchalantly to the trophies. Despite his seemingly carefree attitude, Gerckens draws respect from his colleagues.

"He has the most impressive credits in the department, which is saying something considering the people we

have here," said Kirk. "He could work as a freelance designer anywhere he wants, but he chooses to stay here and teach." For Gerckens, that decision is a personal one.

He grew up in Hilliard, Ohio, in a bustling household of five siblings. His parents were admirers of the arts and worked as teachers, influencing his early passion for teaching. It wasn't until high school that Gerckens became interested in theater. His blunt, self-deprecating sense of humor, which he says he inherited from his father, is still one of his most distinctive features today, other than the ever-present Diet Pepsi in his left hand. After graduating high school and enrolling at Otterbein in 1984, the decision to pursue theatrical lighting design was a simple process of elimination for Gerckens.

"Well, I knew I didn't want to act, and I couldn't draw, so scenery was out. I often make the remark that I can't dress myself, so costume design was out too," he says. "Lighting was the only thing left."

Gerckens recalls a time during his sophomore year when a fellow design tech student was watching him work and said, "You know, you're actually kind of good at this. Why don't you think about pursuing lighting?" That design

photos by Aselya Sposato



tech student is now Gerckens' wife, who also works in the theater industry. They married during Gerckens' senior year at Otterbein.

After graduating from Otterbein, it wasn't long before Gerckens began work at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, and his career took off with Tony Award-winning director Mary Zimmerman. He eventually relocated to Columbus, taking an executive management position at the Contemporary American Theatre Company. When a faculty position at Otterbein opened five years ago, Gerckens knew it was his "dream job." "I've been very fortunate in my career that 90 percent of the work I do is art, the kind you hope to do when you study in school," he says. "But my career always got in the way of teaching. Otterbein was the opportunity I needed to change that."

Gerckens now balances his teaching career at Otterbein with his work as a freelance lighting designer. Recently, he designed Zimmerman's "Metamorphoses" at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in California. Though the semi-frequent jet-setting may seem like the lifestyle of a glamorous, detached individual, Gerckens puts the people in his life first, whether they're his children, students or coworkers.

"My wife and I have a rule that we don't go longer than two weeks without seeing each other, because it's too easy to get separated otherwise," said Gerckens. "Even when I'm away, I remember each theatre, not by the show or the audience or the architecture, but by the people I work with and care about. I'm a people-person."

Nearly two hours have passed in Fritsche

Theatre, and Gerckens and his team of design tech students are now on break. They're only halfway done focusing the lights for the show, but none of them seem to mind how late it's getting. They're clustered around a smartphone, laughing at something on the screen. "Come here, T.J.! You have to see this," one of them shouts, waving him over. Gerckens is immediately surrounded by the students and joins them in a chorus of laughter.

"That's brilliant. Someone send me that," he says. He looks down at his watch. "All right, only about 10 more minutes before we get started again. I'm going downstairs to my office to get a beverage."

"Are you going to get a Diet Pepsi?" one of the students asks, knowingly.

"Yep," Gerckens calls back, already on his way out the door. ■



T.J. Gerckens



Treasure Island-Looking Glass photo by Liz Lauren



Jungle Book photo by Liz Lauren



White Snake photo by Jenny Graham



# What Are You Streaming?

Sneak a peek at the tunes and TV shows these Cardinals can't get enough of.

by Julia Grimm '22 & Jordyn Mary'22

## Music to my ears

Jeremy Hurr, '20

### **Anything by Lizzo**

"It's just all about self-respect and women's rights and equality for all, so that's what I love about it. Her music just really gets me pumped up and ready for the day... it's my feel-good music."

Mario Arevalo-Romero, '22

### **"Beibs in the Trap" by Travis Scott**

"That's one of my favorite artists, and just the whole beat of the song gets me pumped just to do work."

Kerri Carson, '23

### **Walk the Moon Podcast: Getting Curious**

"Walk the Moon helps me get hyped up for class and also focused. Getting Curious gives really in-depth stuff with actual important figures in the field about just random topics. One time he had a special about bugs; another time it was climate change."

Susan Bohland, '21

### **'60s**

"I do a lot of it for study work, particularly music if I'm doing home-work. For podcasts, I do it for really kind of menial tasks, especially if I'm at my on-campus job, which is a lot of organizing."

Maxime Gaudoin-Perry, '22

### **"Burn Slow" by I'm Max and Og White Milk**

"Great song. It's rap, you know, gets you going. Why the podcast? [I'm a] Big Blue Jacket's fan, and they have great content about the Jackets."

## It's showtime

Michaela Erich, '20

### **One Tree Hill**

"I'm re-watching this show because I found out it was on Hulu."

Margaux Plaumann, '22

### **Rick & Morty**

"This show is funny, amusing and it's white noise while I work."

William Sigler, '23

### **Breaking Bad**

"This show has well-written characters, a good story and good drama."

Cassie Overmyer, '21

### **Grey's Anatomy**

"I'm re-watching for the new season that is coming out soon."

Pranith Madishetti, '23

### **"Avatar and the Last Air Bender"**

"I watch it for enjoyment."

Forrest Oliver, '20

### **Letterkenny and Legion**

"Either the show is funny background noise or it makes me curious about something."

Hannah Roos, '22

### **Bachelor in Paradise**

"It's funny, and the drama is too good to not watch!"



# Catching up with Casey

Casey Rife, president of Otterbein University Student Government (OUSG) and senior environmental science and global studies major, spills about changes to expect this academic year, OUSG's importance on campus and life advice she lives by.

by Aselya Sposato '21

## Where are you from, and why did you choose Otterbein?

I'm from Fostoria, Ohio. It's a small town in northwest Ohio. I decided to come to Otterbein [because] my mom had been to a conference here, and she loved it, so I visited and fell in love with the brick roads and trees and everything else on campus.

## What made you want to join OUSG?

It was the First Friday festival my freshman year. I talked to someone at the student government booth, and I just knew that it was something I wanted to do. Being a voice for students who feel like they don't have one is something I've always been passionate about. The one thing that really stuck out to me about OUSG was our shared governance model. Our senators have an equal vote to faculty and staff when we go to university Senate and vote on important things on campus.

## What are your goals as OUSG president for the upcoming school year?

**Transparency:** We just want to make sure that any decisions we're making are being communicated well and timely with the student body, like making sure updates are sent out at the same time to students as they are to faculty and staff and improving our social media presence.

"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."



Photo by Megan Miller

**Sustainability:** We passed a resolution at one of our last meetings calling on the university to hire a cleaning service that would respect our values of recycling and sustainability a little bit better. They have done that, so that is something exciting. One of the things we also want to work on is educating more about alternatives and things you can do to live greener in a campus environment.

**Textbook affordability:** We passed a student life grant at the end of last year that gave a couple thousand dollars to the library to put toward their course

reserve. One thing that student government is going to do over the next year is start a book drive of donated books from students for the library, so there are more recent, updated textbooks.

## What are you up to when you're not busy being OUSG president?

In my free time, I like to read, go to concerts and explore the art scene in Columbus. I also spend time with my dog, Cooper.

## Do you have a personal motto to you live by?

My motto for all of college has been a quote that me and my best friend found on a granola bar wrapper. It's "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone," and [it's] something that we both embraced going into college our freshman year. Throughout the whole process, I never thought I'd be president of student government at my university, so pushing those boundaries and putting yourself in situations you might not see yourself in in the first place is something that's helped get me to where I am today.

## What is one thing you want the student body to know about you, above all else?

I would like students to know I am always an ear to listen to, whether it's Otterbein or personal related. ■



# Dog Days of Summer

Finding peace and acceptance with the help of a four-legged companion.

by Derek Parham '20

"Do you guys know why I have Butter?" My fraternity brothers all turned their heads, but nobody said a word. They've been my closest friends for three years. I'm someone they think they know. The thought of disappointing them terrified me, but I refused to lie to them any longer. So I told them.



Butter was not just any dog; he was one in a long line of canine companions I couldn't have survived without. Tiva was there when my parents divorced. Bindi was by my side to defend when I couldn't defend myself. The constant positive force in my life has been dogs.

I knew the things I'd been exposed to at an early age were not normal, but I thought I'd be able to "roll with the punches." I quickly found out how wrong I was following my first semester of college, when I began to have regular panic attacks, waking up at night, unable to breathe or speak. I hated the person I was and the person I saw myself becoming, but I painted a smile on my face each day.

I was in the spring semester of my first year when I learned about emotional support animals. I read endless articles arguing their legitimacy, but I convinced



photos by Danielle DiMarzio

myself that a dog was what I needed. I began my search. It wasn't long before a puppy waited for me in a local veterinarian office.

I sat in the straight-backed chairs that lined the walls of the veterinary office, my mother pacing around the room, until we heard the feverish scratching of paws against the floor. My heart raced as the door finally opened, releasing a blurry ball of energy into the small office. What was once a sterile, unnerving environment was catapulted into chaos as the 3-month-

old boxer mix darted about the room. All my focus was stolen by this new life that had only just begun to stop his nervous fidgeting.

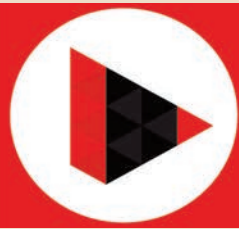
I named him Butter, simply because he looked at me whenever I said the word. Our relationship became almost co-dependent that summer; I took him to work, grocery shopping and to my friends' houses. I was my most authentic self with him around.



"Do you guys know why I have Butter?" Sitting among the men closest to me, I felt my pulse begin to quicken in anticipation. I couldn't look them in the eyes as I told them a few graphic stories of my childhood and how they still affect me today. I stared ahead the entire time in fear of even one look of judgment—or worse, pity. Finally, I felt somebody hug me from behind. It was Mikey. He was followed by Luke, until slowly, I felt my entire fraternity embrace me in a painfully cliché, but overwhelmingly emotional, group hug. There are still a lot of people that need to hear this story, but starting with those that care about me most was just the first step I needed to take to make this process easier, group hugs and all. ■







# T&CMEDIA

T&CMedia is a student-run news organization serving the Otterbein University community that seeks to provide accurate and reliable coverage of events and issues affecting the campus community. T&CMedia is not only an extra-curricular activity, but also a service to the college community in general and the student body in particular. All students are eligible to be involved in all aspects of production.

## Otterbein Media

### The Best in College Radio

WOBN is the student-run radio station of Otterbein University that broadcasts on 97.5 FM. WOBN broadcasts to the Otterbein and Westerville community and can be streamed live anywhere in the world. We play a wide variety of music, from national stars to local artists and are the exclusive radio home for Otterbein athletic. WOBN broadcasts all football games, and most men's and women's basketball and baseball games, as well as select lacrosse games.





